

Message Text

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FROM AMBASSADOR LODGE'S OFFICE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, VT, XF

SUBJECT: VATICAN VIEWS ON MAJOR INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS

1. SUMMARY. VATICAN "FOREIGN MINISTER" ARCHBISHOP CASAROLI JAN 5 ASKED THAT U.S. EXERT ITS INFLUENCE TO PRESERVE LEBANON AS INDEPENDENT PLURALIST STATE, REITERATED VATICAN SUPPORT FOR SECRETARY'S STEP-BY-STEP NEGOTIATIONS IN MIDDLE EAST, AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT EAST-WEST DETENTE BE PURSUED REALISTICALLY AND PATIENTLY AS ONLY ALTERNATIVE TO AVOIDING RETROGRESSION. END SUMMARY.

2. ARCHBISHOP CASAROLI ASKED SARROS TO CALL ON HIM JAN 5. IN MEETING LASTING NEARLY 1 AND A HALF HOURS, CASAROLI REVIEWED VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL ISSUES WHICH HAD RECEIVED COMMENT IN POPE PAUL'S ADDRESS TO COLLEGE OF CARDINALS (ROME 18947). HE STRESSED, HOWEVER, ONLY THREE OF THE MANY SUBJECTS: LEBANON, MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS AND EAST-WEST DETENTE.

3. LEBANON: CASAROLI SAID THAT HE WAS ASKED BY POPE PAUL TO CONVEY TO U.S. GOVERNMENT THE POPE'S PROFOUND ANGUISH CONCERNING LEBANON. HE SAID THAT THE HOLY SEE HOPES THAT USG WILL EXERT ITS INFLUENCE IN SUCH A WAY AS TO PRESERVE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF LEBANON. STATING THAT THIS WAS OF VITAL INTEREST TO HOLY SEE, HE THOUGHT THAT THE MAINTENANCE OF AN INDEPENDENT LEBANON SHOULD BE ALONG REFORM

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LINES BUT SUBSTANTIALLY REFLECT THE PLURALISM OF PRESENT LEB-

ANON. HE CLARIFIED SAYING THAT HE USED THE WORD "SUBSTANTIALLY" ADVISEDLY BECAUSE THE HOLY SEE DID NOT HAVE IN MIND ANY PARTICULAR FORMULA TO SUGGEST, BUT THAT INASMUCH AS THE MAINTENANCE OF CHRISTIAN PREDOMINANCE IS PROBABLY NOT AN ATTAINABLE GOAL; ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE SHOULD BE NO MOSLEM PREDOMINANCE ESTABLISHED. WHATEVER FORMULA IS FINALLY AGREED UPON SHOULD PRESEVE A PLURALISTIC POLITY. HE POINTED OUT THAT LEBANON HAS TRADITIONALLY REPRESENTED AN OPEN WINDOW TO MOSLEM MIDDLE EAST, AND THAT ANY CHANGE WHICH WOULD REPRESENT SHUTTING OFF THIS WINDOW WOULD HAVE RAMIFICATIONS THROUGHOUT MOSLEM WORLD. HE STATED THAT THERE IS A MOSLEM TRADITION THAT NO MOSLEM SHOULD BE RULED BY A CHRISTIAN. HE THOUGHT THAT THIS CONCEPT IS VISIBLE IN ACTIVITIES OF RADICAL MOSLEMS IN LEBANON AS WELL AS IN THE ACTIVITIES OF LIBYA AND PERHAPS SYRIA. HE SAID THAT HOLY SEE WAS PRE-OCCUPIED NOT ONLY WITH THE INFLUENCES OF SYRIA AND LIBYA IN LEBANON, BUT ALSO WITH THOSE OF THE USSR. HE WONDERED, THEREFORE, WHETHER US HAD CONSIDERED APPROACHING THE SOVIET UNION REGARDING THE POSSIBILITY OF INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TOWARDS THE PACIFICATION OF LEBANON. HE THOUGHT THAT THE CRITICAL NATURE OF SITUATION THERE DEMANDED THAT EVERYTHING POSSIBLE SHOULD BE PURSUED, INCLUDING APPROACHES TO SOVIET UNION AND TO EGYPT. EGYPT, HE THOUGHT, WAS PLAYING A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE VIS-A-VIS LEBANON AND SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO CONTINUE.

4. SUPPORT FOR STEP-BY-STEP MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS: CASAROLI POINTED OUT THAT POPE'S ADDRESS TO CARDINALS HAD CONTAINED SPECIFIC SUPPORT FOR THE SECRETARY'S STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO M.E. PEACE. HE ADDED PARENTHETICALLY THAT ON VARIOUS RECENT OCCASIONS, THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO ITALY HAD MADE EFFORTS TO CONVINCE HOLY SEE THAT STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH WAS INADEQUATE. CASAROLI WANTED US TO KNOW THAT THE POPE ENDORSES THE SECRETARY'S NEGOTIATING APPROACH AND CONTINUES TO WISH HIM SUCCESS.

5. EAST-WEST DETENTE: CASAROLI SAID THAT POPE PAUL SO FAR HAS BEEN GREATLY DISAPPOINTED WITH RESULTS OF HELSINKI SPIRIT. HE SAID THAT HOLY SEE IS EXHIBITING GREAT RESTRAINT IN THIS CONNECTION BECAUSE IT SEES NO ALTERNATIVE TO THIS PROCESS OF DETENTE. HE ALSO EXPRESSED HOPE THAT U.S. WOULD LIKEWISE

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CONTINUE TO PURSUE DETENTE REALISTICALLY AND PATEINTLY AS ONLY ALTERNATIVE TO AVOIDING RETROGRESSION. AT END OF CONVERSATION, CASAROLI EXPRESSED WISH THAT WHEN SARROS RETURNS FROM WASHINGTON IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO PROVIDE HIM WITH A CURRENT US ASSESSMENT OF WHERE MATTERS STOOD IN EAST-WEST DETENTE AND WHAT WERE PROSPECTS FOR SALT. VOLPE

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